

Urban and Rural Area Graduate Students’ Perceptions toward Synchronous English Learning amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Teachers and students are forced to change the learning system from face-to-face into virtual learning through synchronous and asynchronous. This transformation perhaps raises various perceptions both urban and rural area students since they have sundry backgrounds and conditions. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the EFL urban and rural area graduate students’ perceptions towards synchronous learning amidst covid-19 pandemic. The respondents of this study were 30 EFL graduate students at English Department in State University of Malang, including 17 urban area students and 13 rural area students who were from 1st semester and 3rd semester. This study was conducted by using survey research design. Furthermore, the data of this study were collected by distributing questionnaire in the form of Google Forms with the combination of close and open ended questions. The findings were urban and rural area students had no significantly different perceptions towards synchronous learning. There were only some different perceptions in terms of learning motivation, learning style, and suitability of the course goal. In addition, the urban and rural area students perceive positive responses to synchronous learning, then synchronous learning can be classified as the effective online learning during this pandemic. However, their common problem was from the slow-speed internet connection. Thus, they feel that synchronous learning is not as effective as face to face learning.

Keywords: *EFL graduate university students, rural students, students’ perception, synchronous learning, urban students.*

1. INTRODUCTION

During this pandemic, teachers and students must carry out and implement all activities from home through the online system. Online learning system is divided into two main areas, learning and technology where learning is the cognitive process for achieving knowledge, and technology is the tool to support the process of achieving it (Aparicio, Baca, Oliveira T, 2016). As cited from dikti.kemendikbud.go.id, Nizam (2020), Director General of Higher Education Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, stated that online learning has been implemented in 1980s in Indonesia before this pandemic comes. But, at that time, the implementation of the online learning itself was not fully done, it was still combined with the face-to-face system, which is called as blended learning. Blended learning is progressively becoming a prospect for higher education students. It permits for the improvement of face-to-face interface between teachers and learners, using internet or computer based techniques (Morris, 2010). Blended learning courses become very popular nowadays in every sphere of academia. They related to those courses in which a substantial amount of seat time, that is, time disbursed in the classroom, is replaced with online activities that include learners in meeting course objectives (Bock.et al., 2018). However, most of formal school and non-formal schools in Indonesia are currently still implementing the online system since the appealance of the Minister of Education, Nadiem Makariem, as quoted from <https://www.thejakartapost.com/> by Pangestika (2020). Consequently, teachers and students “be forced” have to change the learning system from face to face into virtual using the several existing platforms. So, it is needed some solutions to deal with the condition which the process of teaching and learning cannot be done as usual.

There are two types of distance learning which can be classified as synchronous and asynchronous learning. Synchronous learning is similar to the face-to-face where the materials are delivered in real-time but through online so that the students can join the class anywhere, then meetings are conducted either by web conferencing or video conferencing, and students are logged in to take part in the course at the same time (Martin and Betrus, 2019, p. 112). In addition, according to Martin and Betrus (2019, p. 6) the platforms of synchronous learning are Google hangouts, Blackboard collaborate, Zoom, Adobe connect, Skype, Cisco WebEx, Join.me, StartMeeting, Yugma, Appear.in, and Citrix GoToMeeting, at least, have the same minimum features, such as text, audio and video communication (Martin and Betrus, 2019, pp. 120-121). On the other hand, as mentioned by Martin and Betrus (2019, p. 112) asynchronous learning is not real-time online or face-to-face meetings, thus the students can access the material everywhere and anytime. According to Malik, et al (2017), students can learn anywhere and spend their time learning what they want to and need to know without setting time for the active learning.

The implementation of distance learning amidst Covid 19 Pandemic had been conducted by previous researchers. The first study of Ariyanti (2020) proposed EFL Students' Challenges towards Home Learning Policy During Covid-19 Outbreak. It was found that there are three major types of challenges faced by the students such as internet connection, healthy reason, and the use of certain online application. Second research was conducted by Hermansyah, et al (2021), found three English teachers were initially

unfamiliar with online learning, as a result, they faced several obstacles, including using applications or platforms as media in teaching process, teachers' knowledge, time schedule, teacher and students' motivation, and plagiarism. The third study was by Istiqomah (2021) found the students showed positive response toward the implementation of blended learning because of its great benefits in the teaching and learning process. Then, Teachers' creativity was required in providing an English learning platform while implementing the blended learning technique in the classroom. Blended Learning's problems were also identified in this study. The availability of infrastructure such as internet connection and a network in order to execute blended learning was critical to its success. The fourth, the research by Munir, et al (2021) implied WhatsApp could be utilized in the online learning process since it has been shown to get the students perkily joined the learning activities. The fifth research was by Puastika (2020) mentioned the future English teachers find some benefits and lacks from e-learning. The preparation and suggestion for Indonesia's stakeholders to improve the technology development were needed to support the e-learning implementation. The sixth study done by Putra (2021) offered three language learning services (i.e Duolingo, Busuu, and British Council English Learning Kids) are thought due to overcrowding in the classroom to be the greatest potential solutions to keep pupils learning English autonomously even with limited guidance from their teachers. Apart from their benefits, these services have a lack in terms of motivation in learning English through this type of activity. It might be handled by how teachers who have devoted themselves to their professions in order to encourage their students to learn English. Apart from the educators' motivation, parents should be aware that this approach is being carried out in response to the Covid-19 crisis. The seventh research performed by Rosayanti and Hardiana (2021), revealed teachers and students had greater portion of positive views on EFL online classroom implementation. Another findings of their study was all of the students met the criteria minimum of English subject regulated by the school, which means that the students comprehended the topics being taught in the EFL online classroom amidst the Covid-19 outbreak. The eighth study was conducted by Yani (2021) revealed that most teachers who were involved in the research perceived their teaching instructions as fairly effective since the eight general standards of online course evaluation from Quality Matters considered as the basis of the evaluation. It was perceived that the standards evaluating the course overview, learning objectives, course technology, learner support, and accessibility as effective. Assessment and interaction were categorized as fairly effective, meanwhile instructional materials as not effective. The ninth research was done by Sugianto, et al (2020) implied the teachers' intercultural competence was classified as moderate. In addition, some detected challenges involved the aspects of internet access and students' psychological aspect, such as attitudes toward intercultural language teaching and learning conducted in an online classroom. Apart from that, the chance found involved the aspect of language skills, attitudes, and the other supporting skill such as the development of critical thinking

Moreover, as mentioned in the previous that synchronous is real-time learning which means similar to face-to-face learning instead of not real time as asynchronous learning. Thus, synchronous learning, the use of web conferences according to Mujacic, et al (2014) significantly influences the increase of satisfaction and interest with the blended learning students for a more active way in learning. Additionally, Solak and Cakir (2015) argued that

implementing effective online learning strategies is necessary because online learning brings significant impact to the students such as students learn faster, have more pleasure, and learn more efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, in Perveen's (2016) opinion synchronous in language learning mode allows the students to listen to the teacher by giving them exposure to native or non-native listening input. At the same time the students realize some errors they make from the teacher's direct feedback, then the teacher also monitors the students through the chat box.

Michotte (2017) stated that develops perception as a phase of a total process of action which allows us to adjust our activities to the world we live in. Here the students' perception can be described as the developed opinion after having a certain experience that needs adjustment. In addition, Fediynich and Bradley (2015) investigated graduate students' perception of online learning. The finding reveals that interaction between students and the instructor has a major impact on their satisfaction. Other challenges identified were sufficient learner support that linked to campus resources, and the need for varying instructional design and delivery to facilitate students' desire to learn. In line with this, the conclusion of an Indonesian study on the students' perception of using e-learning shows positive responses to the assessment, learning outcomes, and evaluation (Mu'in & Amelia, 2018). Those studies somehow generate positive responses in a well-established condition. As explained by Dube (2020), rural area is a place where it is isolated from urban areas which is located in village, forest, and mountain that most of the societies are farmers who have lack of access in socio-economic facilities, such as quality education, good health services, transportation, marketing facilities, even electricity. Whereas, as mentioned by Potts (2013) urban area is closely related to the absence of agricultural land and employment as its economic characteristics.

Furthermore, there are some previews research related to the students' perception on synchronous learning. First, the study which was conducted by Sulisworo, et al (2020) found that there is no significant difference perception on online learning both urban and remote students. But, the difference is only on the perception of the Easy to Use aspect, because online learning is a new way of learning for the students in remote areas. Additionally, she also mentioned that there are no results yet regarding how students perceive online learning. There are still doubts about education policy makers regarding the ability of students in remote areas and students in urban areas. From the aspect of internet network infrastructure, there is no difference between cities and not cities. Internet penetration in Indonesia is cities and not cities. Internet penetration in Indonesia is already good, including the spread of access to technology. The second is the research by Ghazal, Samsudin & Aldowah (2015) found that there are some most important problem in synchronous learning, such as disconnection and audio problem, hardware problem like sound and internet connection, students also got bored because they cannot see each other because of the limitation of the platform (Skype), then they also have perception related to time management and the environment of synchronous learning. But, the use of synchronous learning where lessons are carried out in real-time, students between urban and rural areas may have different perceptions about this. Some of the obstacles which are faced by the students in synchronous

learning such as inflexible and bad connection, so that those make them feel frustrated because can affect their learning process (Perveen, 2016).

Unfortunately, there were only a few studies that discuss the difference in perceptions between urban and rural students about the implementation of synchronous learning during this pandemic. Most of the studies were only the students' perception about the synchronous or online learning. Therefore, this study aims to investigate EFL urban and rural area students' perception of synchronous online system during the covid-19 pandemic, especially focuses on the EFL graduate students of State University of Malang who include the urban and rural area from different cities and islands. They usually use two synchronous platforms, such as Google Meet and Zoom during the class. Some or most of graduate students often have bad connection in accessing those synchronous online systems while joining the class.

Regarding those considerations, the researchers formulate the research question as follow: What are urban and rural area graduate students' perception toward English synchronous learning amidst Covid 19 Pandemic?

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The respondents of this study were 30 EFL graduate students at English Department in State University of Malang, including 17 urban area students and 13 rural area students who were from 1st semester and 3rd semester. Furthermore, because of this pandemic, the data of this study were collected by online questionnaires that given to the students who have synchronous learning through Google Meet and Zoom. The data of this study was collected through the analysis of students' perceptions in rural and urban area, based on their personal experience during online learning. The questionnaire was designed based on the construct of perception theory.

As mentioned before that this study focused on urban and rural area students' perception of synchronous learning during covid-19 pandemic synchronous. Thus, the questions were arranged based on those major topics. Survey design was chosen in this study, because survey research is typically used to describe opinions, attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of people of interest as confirming to Latief (2019). In addition, this survey was held through online in the form of Google Forms was distributed as the instrument of collecting the data through questionnaires, which are divided into closed and open-ended questions as the source of data because of its ease in making, distributing, filling, and calculating the results. Hyman & Sierra (2016) explained that closed-ended question refers to the multiple-choice questions respondents probably preferred, while when the answers in the form of essay or short answer questions, it is defined as open-ended question.

As previously mentioned, the questionnaires were distributed and collected in the form of Google Form with a combination of close and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were distributed to the EFL university students to capture their perceptions in the form of Likert scale in 4 choices, which are 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree', 'strongly agree' and to obtain the percentage of the analyzed topics. Meanwhile, the open-ended questions were also administered to capture their more detail perceptions which might be not covered in the closed-ended questions regarding to the topics on the implementation of synchronous learning. The received responses were calculated, analyzed, and described based on their topics.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the students' responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that most of the rural and urban students are interested in learning synchronously during this pandemic because synchronous learning is flexible, more real, can improve their language skills, and also the platform used are categorized easy to operate. In addition, both of them agreed that synchronous learning is more real than asynchronous learning, whereas they still prefer having face to face learning to having synchronous learning. The results highlighted to the two main objectives as followed:

1. Urban and rural area students' perception on synchronous learning in learning English.
2. Urban and rural area students' perception on the effectiveness of synchronous learning.

Table: 1 Urban Students' Perception on Synchronous Learning in Learning English.

Questions	Urban Area Students					
	Mean	Mode	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I am interested in learning synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom)	0,81	A	23,5%	76,5%	0,0%	0,0%
2. I believe that learning synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom) save teachers' and students' time	0,76	A	29,4%	47,1%	23,5%	0,0%
3. I think that the features of synchronous learning platforms like Zoom and Google Meet are relatively easy to operate.	0,85	A	47,1%	47,1%	5,9%	0,0%
4. I think that learning becomes more real by synchronous learning than asynchronous.	0,79	A	52,9%	11,8%	35,3%	0,0%
5. I think that I can access information synchronously without being limited by distance, space, time and anywhere (with Google Meet and Zoom)	0,84	A	47,1%	41,2%	11,8%	0,0%
6. I think that the use of synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) in learning attract my attention	0,72	A	11,8%	64,7%	23,5%	0,0%
7. I think that synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) promote learning motivation	0,66	D	23,5%	17,6%	58,8%	0,0%
8. I think that the synchronous learning process (using Google Meet and Zoom) is fun.	0,66	A	11,8%	47,1%	35,3%	5,9%
9. I believe that the synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) can increase my creativity	0,72	A	17,6%	52,9%	29,4%	0,0%
10. I think that the synchronous learning (using	0,66	D	11,8%	41,2%	47,1%	0,0%

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Google Meet and Zoom) fit my learning style						
11. I think that the synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) suit to the course goals.	0,69	A	5,9%	64,7%	29,4%	0,0%

*Adapted from article by Amin & Sundari (2020), Cakrawati, L.M. (2017), Athirah, et al. (2020).

Table: 2 Rural Students' Perception on Synchronous Learning in Learning English.

Questions	Rural Area Students					
	Mean	Mode	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I am interested in learning synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom)	0,71	A	7,7%	69,2%	23,1%	0,0%
2. I believe that learning synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom) save teachers' and students' time	0,71	A	7,7%	69,2%	23,1%	0,0%
3. I think that the features of synchronous learning platforms like Zoom and Google Meet are relatively easy to operate.	0,77	A	15,4%	76,9%	7,7%	0,0%
4. I think that learning becomes more real by synchronous learning than asynchronous.	0,69	A	15,4%	53,8%	23,1%	7,7%
5. I think that I can access information synchronously without being limited by distance, space, time and anywhere (with Google Meet and Zoom)	0,79	A	23,1%	69,2%	7,7%	0,0%
6. I think that the use of synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) in learning attract my attention	0,67	A	0,0%	69,2%	30,8%	0,0%
7. I think that synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) promote learning motivation	0,67	A	7,7%	61,5%	23,1%	7,7%
8. I think that the synchronous learning process (using Google Meet and Zoom) is fun.	0,62	A	0,0%	53,8%	38,5%	7,7%
9. I believe that the synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) can increase my creativity	0,67	A	7,7%	61,5%	23,1%	7,7%
10. I think that the synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) fit my learning style	0,63	A	0,0%	53,8%	46,2%	0,0%
11. I think that the synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) suit to the course goals.	0,62	D	0,0%	46,2%	53,8%	0,0%

*Adapted from article by Amin & Sundari (2020), Cakrawati, L.M. (2017), Athirah, et al. (2020).

The result of the survey showed that most of the students in rural and urban area had the same opinion that they are interested in learning synchronously during this pandemic, with the percentage of agreement 76,5% from urban area students and 69,2 % from rural area students. Among the dominant positive responses that were supported widely by the students were learning English synchronously saves teachers' and students' time with 29,4% strongly agree and 47,1% agree with the statement from the perception from urban area

students then 7,7% strongly agree and 69,2% agree with the statement from rural area students. Another significant finding, students had a perception that the synchronous learning is more real with the percentage of 52,9% with the students of urban area students and 53,8% agree with the statement from rural area students. Other than that, the students perceived that the synchronous learning is relative easy to operate with the percentage of 47,1 % for strongly agree and agree statement from urban area students and 76,9% agree from rural area students. Furthermore, 47,1% urban area students strongly agree and 69,2% rural area students agree that it is easy for them to access any information related to the course and the class regardless of where they are, distance and time. Similarly, the percentage of the statement about students’ attractiveness of synchronous learning is 64,7% agree from urban area students and 69,2 agree from the rural area students. Equally important finding of the survey that the students perceived synchronous learning is fun with 47,1% of urban area students agreed with that statement and 53,8% of rural area students agreed to that statement. Again, the synchronous learning increases both urban and rural area students’ creativity with the agreement of 52,9% from urban area students and 61,5% from rural area students.

On the other hand, students from urban and rural area have the different perception about the learning motivation by synchronous learning. 58,8% of urban area students disagreed that synchronous learning promotes their learning motivation, while 61,5% of rural area students agreed that synchronous learning promotes their learning motivation. Besides, 47,1% of urban area students disagreed and 53,8% of rural area students agreed with the statement that synchronous learning fits to their learning style. The last different perception, 64,7% of urban area students agreed that the synchronous learning suits to the course goal and 53,8% of rural area students disagreed with that statement. In general, most of the statements were agreed by the students either in urban area students or rural area students. Therefore, some statements were perceived differently by urban and rural area students related to their learning motivation, learning style, and also the suitability of the course goal.

Table: 3 Urban Area Students’ Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Synchronous Learning.

Questions	Urban Area Students					
	Mean	Mode	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe that I understand the lesson better through synchronous learning than asynchronous learning.	0,78	A	29,4%	52,9%	17,6%	0,0%
2. I believe that I understand the lesson better through synchronous learning than real face-to-face learning	0,52	D	11,8%	0,0%	70,6%	17,6%
3. I believe that learning synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom) is as effective as face-to-face learning.	0,49	D	5,9%	11,8%	52,9%	29,4%

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4. I believe that I can focus more on the lesson when it is done synchronously.	0,63	D	11,8%	35,3%	47,1%	5,9%
5. I believe that I can get better feedback when learning synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom)	0,62	D	5,9%	35,3%	58,8%	0,0%
6. I believe that I can improve my language skills when learning synchronously (through Google Meet and Zoom).	0,69	A	5,9%	64,7%	29,4%	0,0%
7. I think it is difficult to learn synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom) because of the slow-speed internet connection.	0,76	A	29,4%	47,1%	23,5%	0,0%
8. I think that synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) can cause the misunderstanding between the students and the teacher because of the delay interaction due to the slow-speed internet connection.	0,85	A	52,9%	35,3%	11,8%	0,0%

*Adapted from article by Amin & Sundari (2020), Cakrawati, L.M. (2017), Athirah, et al. (2020).

Table: 4 Rural Area Students' Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Synchronous learning.

Questions	Rural Area Students					
	Mean	Mode	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe that I understand the lesson better through synchronous learning than asynchronous learning.	0,67	A	15,4%	38,5%	46,2%	0,0%
2. I believe that I understand the lesson better through synchronous learning than real face-to-face learning	0,42	D	0,0%	0,0%	69,2%	30,8%
3. I believe that learning synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom) is as effective as face-to-face learning.	0,46	D	0,0%	15,4%	53,8%	30,8%
4. I believe that I can focus more on the lesson when it is done synchronously.	0,58	D	0,0%	46,2%	38,5%	15,4%
5. I believe that I can get better feedback when learning synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom)	0,58	D	0,0%	38,5%	53,8%	7,7%
6. I believe that I can improve my language skills when learning synchronously (through Google Meet and Zoom).	0,63	A	0,0%	61,5%	30,8%	7,7%
7. I think it is difficult to learn synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom) because of the slow-speed internet connection.	0,77	A	46,2%	23,1%	23,1%	7,7%
8. I think that synchronous learning (using Google Meet and Zoom) can cause the misunderstanding between the students and the teacher because of the delay interaction due to the slow-speed internet connection.	0,81	A	46,2%	38,5%	7,7%	7,7%

*Adapted from article by Amin & Sundari (2020), Cakrawati, L.M. (2017), Athirah, et al. (2020).

Based on the table above considering the effectiveness of synchronous learning, it was found that all the questionnaires have the same perception between urban and rural area students. These same perception include agreement and disagreement. Students' perception related to the better understanding using synchronous learning than asynchronous learning from strongly agree and agree statement had 82,3% from urban area students and 53,9 from rural area students. Likewise, 64,7% of urban area students and 69,2% of rural area students disagreed that the students understand the lesson better through synchronous learning than real face to face learning. Similarly, the statement that learning synchronously (using Google Meet and Zoom) is as effective as face to face learning was disagreed by 52,9% of urban area students and 53,8% of rural area students. 53% of urban students and 53,9% of rural area students disagreed that they can focus more on the lesson when it is done synchronously. These percentage is from either disagree and strongly disagree statement. In the same way, the students expressed their disagreement of getting better feedback when learning synchronously, with the percentage of 58,8% urban students and 53,8% rural area students. The students reflected on the role synchronous learning in improving their language skill. This item had 64,7% of agreement from the urban area students and 61,5% agreement from the rural area students. In addition, related to their difficulties in synchronous learning due to the slow-speed of the internet connection got the highest agreement with 76,5% from urban area students and 69,3% from rural area students either from strongly agree or agree statement. It also confirms that internet connection can cause the misunderstanding between students and teacher both strongly agreed and agreed statement with the percentage of 88,2 % urban are students and 84,7% rural area students.

Table: 5 Open Ended Responses about Urban and Rural Area Students' Perception on Synchronous Learning.

Item Category	No. of Responses	
	Urban	Rural
Student's Common Problem		
1. Internet connection	12	8
2. Interference from outside	1	
3. Low motivation	1	
4. No fixed plan	1	
5. Hard to understand material	1	
6. Boring	1	
7. The lecturer does not advance to operate the synchronous platform		1
8. Prefer asynchronous		1
Students' location affect the process of synchronous learning because of the internet connection		
1. Yes	9	11
2. No	8	2
Students difficulties in synchronous learning		
1. The internet connection	11	11
• Loose explanation (robotic or delay sounds either from teacher	6	3

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or friends)		
• Cannot share PPT		2
2. Error learning devices		
• Mic		1
• suddenly freeze		1
• old devices	2	
3. No difficulties	3	1
4. Need adaptation	1	
Positive and Negative Experience in Synchronous learning		
1. Positive		
• Effective and efficient (seems like face to face learning)	12	2
• Flexibility	5	5
• Get new learning experience		5
• Increase learning motivation		1
2. Negative		
• Internet connection	11	8
• Hard to understand material	1	1
• Get bored	2	1
• Device problem	1	
• Not effective and efficient	1	4
• No negative experience	1	
Synchronous Learning as Effective as Face to Face		
1. Yes	1	3
2. No	16	10
Preferences between Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning		
1. Synchronous	11	7
2. Asynchronous	2	4
3. Both synchronous and asynchronous	3	
4. No preferences		1
5. Depend	1	

*This indicates the number of participants who provided one or more of the responses shown in each respective category. Some users' responses fit more than one category.

N (Urban) =17, N (Rural) =13

Based on the table above, the common problem that the students faced was the internet connection. Because of this slow speed internet connection, both the urban and rural heard robotic and delay sound either from the lecturer or friends. Therefore, the students lost explanation and it caused misunderstanding between the students and the lecturer. This finding was supported by few studies that the students face difficulty in interacting with other participants in online learning due to internet connection problem (Ismail, et al, 2020; Coman, et al, 2020; Anwar & Wahid, 2021). Similarly, a research carried out by Ghazal, Samsudin & Aldowah (2015) confirms that there are some most important problem in synchronous learning, such as disconnection and audio problem, hardware problem like sound and internet connection. However, this finding is contradictive with the previous research findings conducted by Ariyanti (2020) that students in rural area have more stable internet connection rather than students in remote area since students in rural area have limited infrastructure like internet connection and electricity (Ferri, et al, 2020) which

requires them to look for better signals by travelling and hiking some hills out of their village (Agung, et al, 2020). In addition, both urban and rural area students had the same agreement that synchronous learning is not as effective as face to face learning. They think there is no interruption like internet connection in face to face learning so that they can join the teaching and learning process effectively without any interruption. This finding was compatible with the results of the studies conducted by Shukri, et al (2020) and Ismail, et al (2020) which students believe that online synchronous learning is not as effective as traditional classes. In contrast, Zacharis (2011) found that there were no significant difference between learners in online mode and traditional mode in achievement, means that selected modes of learning had no any effect. Nevertheless, if it is compared to online learning such as synchronous and asynchronous learning, they still prefer the synchronous learning to asynchronous learning, because it seems like face to face learning even in virtual situation. They can still get live feedback from the lecturer or other friends in class and also had live interaction with each other during the teaching learning process. This result was linked to the previous findings which revealed students' preference in e-learning is on synchronous learning than asynchronous learning (Nguyen et al, 2021) in terms of supporting students' psychological needs and social aspects in teaching-learning activities which include feedback and interaction (Fabrizz, Mendzheritskaya & Stehle, 2021). In addition, the students got better achievement in synchronous learning rather than in asynchronous learning as the evidence of the findings of Duncan, et al (2012) and Libasin, et al (2021). On the contrary, Murphy et al (2011) proved students in high school preferred having chatting to talking on video conference (i.e. Skype which implied they would rather have asynchronous learning than synchronous learning).

In general, from the analysis of those all tables above, which were from closed and opened-ended responses, there were only some differences between urban and rural students' perceptions on the use of synchronous learning which were from on the perception of learning motivation, learning style, and also the suitability of the course goal. Rural area students agreed that synchronous learning can promote their learning motivation and it fits to their learning style, while the urban area students disagreed with those statements. In addition related to the suitability between the synchronous learning and course goal, only the urban area students agreed with it. The findings are in line with the result of the study conducted by Sulisworo, et al (2020) who stated there is no significant difference perception on online learning both urban and remote students. Both urban and rural area students agreed that their common problem during synchronous learning was from the internet connection. On the other had, both urban and rural area students had the same perception that synchronous learning was useful and can be as an alternative tool during this pandemic, even though both of them faced problem in slow speed internet connection in teaching-learning process. However, if it was compared to face to face learning, the students still prefer having real face to face learning to having synchronous learning as discussed in the previous paragraph.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, urban and rural area students had no significantly different perceptions towards synchronous learning. There were only some differences of perceptions in terms of learning motivation, learning style, and suitability of the course goal. In addition, synchronous learning can be classified as the effective online learning during this pandemic. It was confirmed based on findings. However, students in urban and rural areas had the same difficulties due to the slow-speed internet connection because they heard robotic and delay sound either from the lecturer or other friends. Consequently, the students lost explanation and it caused misunderstanding between the students and the lecturer. Thus, both of students stated that synchronous learning is not as effective as real face to face learning so that they still prefer having real face to face learning to having synchronous learning.

Regarding the findings of this study, some recommendations are suggested for lecturer and students. For the lecturer, they are expected to be able to adapt and alert in facing online learning during this pandemic by preparing the suitable materials and mastering the utilization of online learning platforms, especially synchronous learning platforms in order to avoid some lacks in operating the online learning system. Those requirements are done to engage the students' motivation to be attractive in the process of virtual teaching and learning. For the students, before joining the online class, especially synchronous learning, students should be prepared for their internet connection and mental maturity because they are expected to trigger their learning awareness. The purpose is to make them familiar with learning situations during pandemic to gain the success of virtual teaching and learning process.

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